



**INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE ORGANIZATION**

## **Diploma Programme**

### **School guide to the authorization visit**

*Diploma Programme*  
*School guide to the authorization visit*

*Published November 2006*

© International Baccalaureate Organization 2003, 2006

Organisation du Baccalauréat International  
Route des Morillons 15  
Grand-Saconnex, Genève  
CH-1218  
SWITZERLAND

# Contents

---

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Aims of the visit</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Criteria and conditions for authorization</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The process of the visit</b>	<b>5</b>
Before the visit	
During the visit	
After the visit	
<b>The IBO visiting team</b>	<b>6</b>
Composition of the team	
Responsibilities and training	
Reimbursement of expenses	
<b>Preparation for the visit</b>	<b>7</b>
School preparation	
Meetings	
<b>The visit agenda</b>	<b>8</b>
Draft agenda	
Agenda items	
Sample agenda	
<b>Issues for consideration</b>	<b>10</b>
School administration/district administration/governing body	
Diploma Programme coordinator	
Diploma Programme teachers	
Librarians, counsellors and non-teaching staff	
Parents and students	
Tour of school facilities	
The library/resource centre	
<b>Outcome of the authorization visit</b>	<b>15</b>
Exit interview	
After the exit interview	
Possible outcomes	



# Introduction

---

This *Diploma Programme school guide to the authorization visit* should be read in conjunction with:

- *Diploma Programme guide to school application*
- *Diploma Programme application form parts A and B*
- *Application procedure for candidate schools*
- *Programme standards and practices*
- *IB learner profile booklet*
- *Rules for authorized schools: Diploma Programme*
- *General regulations: Diploma Programme.*

Further information can be found in *Schools' guide to the Diploma Programme* (<http://www.ibo.org>).

Candidate schools applying for formal authorization to offer the Diploma Programme of the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) are required to host an **authorization visit**, conducted by an IBO visiting team, after the school has prepared itself for at least one year and preferably longer. *Diploma Programme application form part B* must be completed and sent to the regional office at least two months before the authorization visit.

The **authorization visit** is intended to ensure that the candidate school is genuinely committed to the pursuit of excellence in international education. The IBO visiting team also ascertains the school's preparedness to offer the programme and verifies that the school's planning has been both systematic and comprehensive.

The subsequent **authorization visit report** makes a series of professional judgments about the preparedness of the school to offer the Diploma Programme and, where necessary, indicates matters warranting attention and improvement. After receiving the report, the IBO director general notifies the school whether or not it has been authorized to offer the programme.

The purpose of authorization visits, more generally, is **not** to appraise or assess individual teachers or school administrators. Rather, it is to ensure that the educational philosophy and practices on which the Diploma Programme is founded will be maintained and furthered by the candidate schools.

This *Diploma Programme school guide to the authorization visit*:

- explains the rationale for the visit
- states the principles to be observed
- provides details of each stage of the process and practical advice
- provides an outline of the issues that the school should have addressed during preparation for the implementation of the programme.

# Aims of the visit

---

The IBO visiting team will check that the criteria and conditions for schools to be authorized to teach the Diploma Programme have been or will be met, within an established period of time, by the school. The aims of the authorization visit, and the subsequent authorization visit report, are to:

1. evaluate the preparedness of the candidate school to offer the Diploma Programme
2. determine whether or not the school is committed to the philosophy and standards and practices of the Diploma Programme
3. obtain a clear overview of how the philosophy of the Diploma Programme compares with the educational philosophy of the school
4. convey clearly in the report to the regional office a series of:
  - commendations (of good practice)
  - recommendations (items to which the school is asked to respond, but which will not be mandatory for authorization to proceed)
  - matters to be addressed (aspects warranting attention and improvement within a certain time for authorization to proceed and/or to be maintained)
5. assist the school management in diagnosing potential weaknesses in the candidate school's plans for implementing a successful Diploma Programme.

As stated in the introduction, the aim of the authorization visit is **not** to appraise or assess individual teachers or school administrators. The role of the IBO visiting team is intended to be supportive. It is important that those involved in the visit do not perceive the process as an assessment of any individual.

# Criteria and conditions for authorization

---

(Please also refer to articles 3 and 5 of *Application procedure for candidate schools*.)

1. Diploma Programme candidate schools (that is, schools whose *Application form part A* has been accepted by the regional office) shall be committed to the promotion of international understanding through education, as expressed by the standards and practices of the IBO. In particular, they shall:
  - a) through their pedagogy, promote and open opportunities for educational excellence by providing a balanced curriculum and by facilitating concurrency of learning
  - b) introduce students to skills appropriate to independent research via the extended essay
  - c) recognize the fundamental, integrative role of theory of knowledge (TOK) and the habits of mind that it should inculcate in students
  - d) realize the potential of the creativity, action, service (CAS) requirement, complementing academic pursuits in the personal development of students.
2. Schools shall demonstrate to the IBO that they will have the required teaching faculty, administrative staff and other resources with which to implement the Diploma Programme successfully. Since the IBO is conscious of the vast disparities in resources available to schools in different parts of the world, agreement on this issue shall be a matter of consultation and guidance, if necessary over an extended period of preparation.
3. Schools shall demonstrate their legal status and financial viability on the basis of appropriate documentation. Schools may be asked to furnish proof to the IBO that their application to participate in the Diploma Programme has the approval of their local, regional or national authorities.
4. Schools shall formally agree to bind themselves to full acceptance of all IBO requirements encompassing the effective conduct of the Diploma Programme, with particular attention to its student-centred philosophy, TOK and CAS. Schools will appoint a Diploma Programme coordinator and a CAS coordinator.
5. Each school, or each campus of a school that is located on two or more sites, is admitted as a separate entity. This policy is reflected in the payment of all fees.
6. It is imperative that potential Diploma Programme teachers have undertaken IBO-approved professional development before teaching their subject.
7. Schools are authorized to teach only their own students. Schools may register candidates from other schools for examinations only if they are retake candidates whose circumstances prevent them from attending their original school for the subsequent examination session. Authorized participating schools may not register candidates from unauthorized schools.
8. The programmes of the IBO should not be marginal in IB World Schools; it is expected that they will positively influence those sections of a school not following an IB programme.
9. The IBO visiting team will take into consideration factors that include:
  - the extent to which plans are in place for the school to achieve the standards and practices of the programme
  - the degree to which the teaching and learning at the school supports students in developing the attributes listed in the IB learner profile booklet
  - what the school can bring to its own community and to that of the IBO
  - how the school's organizational structure supports the implementation of the programme and philosophy of the IBO

- the school's relationship with other schools in the local community.
10. New schools should normally have been in existence for at least three years before they can be authorized.

The IBO reserves the right to deny participation to any school whose philosophy, policy, standards or practices are judged to be incompatible with those of the IBO.

Authorization to offer the Diploma Programme may be withdrawn if the IBO is not satisfied the programme is being implemented within its pedagogical and administrative guidelines. In all such instances, due consideration shall be given to protect the interests of students already enrolled in the Diploma Programme.

Only authorized schools are entitled to use the IB World School logo, or advertise themselves as an IB World School, and only in connection with the IB programme(s) they have been authorized to teach.



# The process of the visit

---

Following receipt of the completed *Diploma Programme application form part B*, with accompanying documentation and the relevant application fee, the IBO will arrange with the school when the authorization visit is to take place. Each visit normally lasts two days, but this may vary according to the size of the school.

**Note:** The *Diploma Programme application form part B* and appendices should be completed electronically and returned to the appropriate regional office. In consultation with the regional office, any supporting documentation should be sent on CD-Rom(s) wherever possible. Where this is not possible, hard copies of the documents should be provided. Please ensure that the school is clearly identified in all correspondence.

## Before the visit

The school will ensure that the teaching staff have undertaken IBO-approved professional development and that the materials required for the IBO visiting team have been prepared.

After the formal application is processed, an agenda for the visit is arranged in consultation with the school. The IBO selects and appoints the visiting team, keeping members informed about the arrangements for the visit and the preparatory work required.

The dates for the visit are decided in consultation with the candidate school.

## During the visit

The focus of the visit is formal interviews and informal dialogues with individuals, teams or groups; as many as possible of those who will be involved in the school's programme should be included in the process. The IBO visiting team will primarily:

- meet with administrators, teachers, parents and students
- view the school's facilities
- assess resources and instructional materials
- gather information leading to the visit report
- visit classes (optional).

## After the visit

After the visit, the visiting team produces an authorization visit report and this is sent to the regional office; the regional director then makes a recommendation to the IBO director general who will make a final decision and inform the school directly. Authorized schools are expected to:

- submit a response to any matters to be addressed indicated by the director general
- submit a response to any recommendations made by the regional office in connection with the authorization visit
- demonstrate an ongoing commitment to professional development.

A second visit may be required.

# The IBO visiting team

---

## Composition of the team

The IBO invites suitably qualified practitioners and administrators of the Diploma Programme to be trained to conduct authorization visits and to participate as members of visiting teams. The regional offices appoint a visiting team leader and team members (two to three, depending on the size of the school) who may be coordinators and/or heads of school.

Staff from the school being visited cannot be members of the visiting team. Normally, members of the team may not visit schools where they have recently taught, or with which they otherwise have, or have had, a close relationship. If it presents a potential conflict of interest, team members should not visit a school in close proximity to their own.

## Responsibilities and training

When visiting a candidate school, members of the visiting team are required to be fully aware of the aims of the visit and to follow the procedures for conducting the visit as described in this guide. Their role is **not** to appraise or assess individual teachers or school administrators.

The regional offices are responsible for the training and induction of new visiting team members. Team members are expected to be available to make a number of authorization visits and may be asked to assist in training new team members.

## Reimbursement of expenses

The candidate school will be required either to pay a fixed amount or to reimburse the expenses of visiting team members through the appropriate regional office/regional representative, or to make local arrangements at no cost to the visiting team. Expenses incurred in such visits include:

- travel (including visas where necessary)
- accommodation
- subsistence.

The IBO provides visiting team members with an expenses claim form and guidance on the type of expenses that will be reimbursed, for example:

- responsibility for payment if a visiting team member arrives early or stays later than the scheduled visit
- advice on minimizing travelling costs
- guidance on what additional expenses are acceptable.

No honorarium is paid to visiting team members.

# Preparation for the visit

---

The best possible use can be made of the time available if the visit is planned carefully and both the visiting team and the candidate school are fully prepared. This is achieved by the exchange of information and consultation between the IBO, the school and the visiting team members.

## School preparation

The candidate school should have completed the *Diploma Programme application form part B* and provided a sufficient number of copies of the supporting documentation, as specified by the regional office. Those at the school who will be involved in the authorization visit should have read the guidelines and have prepared particularly for the issues that will be considered by the visiting team.

The school may be asked to assist with practical arrangements concerning such matters as accommodation and local transport.

**Note:** The *Diploma Programme application form part B* and appendices should be completed electronically and returned to the appropriate regional office. In consultation with the regional office, any supporting documentation should be sent on CD-Rom(s) wherever possible. Where this is not possible, hard copies of the documents should be provided. Please ensure that the school is clearly identified in all correspondence.

## Meetings

The visiting team leader, in consultation with the school, decides which visiting team members and representatives of the school should attend which meetings. Specific meetings with teachers or visits to classes will be with the agreement of individual teachers.

Preparation of the authorization visit report can begin after the first day of the visit, allowing the visiting team to:

- discuss and clarify findings
- work out the structure and emphasis of the report
- agree on major commendations, recommendations and matters to be addressed
- consider whether or not to recommend authorization.

# The visit agenda

---

## Draft agenda

Details of the agenda are determined before the visit. The visiting team leader may revise the agenda slightly on site if the need arises and the school is able to accommodate the request.

In setting the agenda for the visit, decisions about school staff attending meetings outside normal school hours are left to the school; the IBO cannot insist that staff attend.

Any visits to classes should be arranged in consultation with the school and only with the consent of the teacher(s) concerned.

## Agenda items

All agendas for authorization visits have items in common. These items will provide the visiting team with sufficient evidence and information from the visit to write the authorization visit report, and should include:

- formal interviews with the school administration, the Diploma Programme coordinator, teachers, groups of students, governors, school board members, parents and others who will be involved in the programme
- informal dialogues with teachers, students, administrators, librarians
- visits to classes (optional)
- a tour of school facilities, with particular attention to those areas intended to support the Diploma Programme
- access to displays, presentations and student work (as appropriate), and conversations with those involved in their production.

## Sample agenda

As stated, details of the agenda are determined and confirmed before the visit. The precise agenda will depend on factors such as the size of the school and the information provided by the school prior to the visit. The following sample agenda is a model that can be adapted to suit the needs of each visit.

## Sample agenda

<b>DAY ONE</b>		
<b>0900–0930</b>	Introductions	Head of school Principal of secondary (high) school Diploma Programme coordinator Senior management team
<b>0930–1000</b>	Meeting	Principal of secondary school
<b>1000–1030</b>	Meeting	Diploma Programme coordinator
<b>1030–1130</b>	Tour of school	Informal conversations
<b>1130–1230</b>	Meetings with individuals and small groups	Subject teachers
<b>1230–1330</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>	
<b>1330–end of school day</b>	Visits to classes and formal meetings	Individual teachers, for example, subject teachers heads of department TOK teacher(s) CAS coordinator(s) Groups of teachers, for example, subject teachers
<b>1630–1730</b>	Meetings	Parents, members of school board, non-teaching and counselling staff
<b>Evening</b>	Review meeting	IBO visiting team
<b>DAY TWO</b>		
<b>0900–1230</b>	Visits to classes and formal meetings	Individual teachers, for example, subject teachers Groups of teachers and students
<b>1230–1330</b>	<b>LUNCH</b>	
<b>1330–1430</b>	Meeting	All staff: question and answer session
<b>1430–1530</b>	Meeting: evaluation of visit	IBO visiting team
<b>1530–1630</b>	Exit interview: comments, question and answer session	School administration and Diploma Programme coordinator

# Issues for consideration

---

The following questions are typical of those that may be posed by the visiting team; they may form the basis of dialogues during the visit. Most often, meetings with various members of the school community will take place separately, but similar questions will be addressed. In this way, the understanding of each person/group of the Diploma Programme, and their commitment to it, can be ascertained.

## School administration/district administration/governing body

- What are your main reasons for wishing to offer the Diploma Programme?
- How will the school administration support the programme? Who is responsible for pedagogical leadership within the school?
- How is the philosophy of your school compatible with the philosophy of the Diploma Programme and with the IBO's mission statement? Are there any differences?
- Is there a strategic plan for the implementation of the Diploma Programme, identifying staff responsibilities for:
  - head of school
  - Diploma Programme coordinator
  - TOK teacher(s)
  - CAS coordinator(s)
  - subject teachers
  - others involved in the programme?
- Have you read and understood the *Programme standards and practices*? What plans does the school have for achieving them?
- Are you familiar with the *IB learner profile booklet*? Will students be provided with sufficient opportunities to develop the attributes listed in the profile?
- Does the school have a uniform approach to curriculum planning, including a commitment to collaborative planning, with appropriate adjustments to workloads and scheduling?
- Are there sufficient funds to start and maintain the programme? Will these funds extend to any additional library and science laboratory facilities that may be required?
- What funding is available for any additional resources that may be required to implement the programme, for example:
  - staffing
  - administrative periods for coordinators
  - additional departmental resources
  - preparation time for teachers?
- As the Diploma Programme curriculum is reviewed and developed, it is important that your teachers participate in IBO-approved professional development in order to be exposed to the international focus of the programme. Is there a professional development plan in place to support this training? What funds will be provided?

- Has the budget provision been endorsed by the school board/district? Is their support long-term?
- How have teachers been involved in the decision to adopt the Diploma Programme? What has been the role of parents, students, community members and the school board in the decision?
- Are your teaching staff committed to the implementation of the programme?
- How will the school's timetable be affected? Are all subject groups addressed? What group 6 subjects do you plan to offer?
- If the Middle Years Programme is offered, have issues of interface with the MYP been addressed?
- If the Middle Years Programme is not offered, has an adequate course of study been developed to prepare students for the rigours of the IB Diploma Programme?
- Does the school have a policy for students with special educational needs?

## **Diploma Programme coordinator**

- Why does your school want to offer the Diploma Programme?
- Are other courses (for example, Advanced Placement or A-Level) going to run in parallel?
- Will your school have to satisfy particular national requirements over and above the Diploma Programme? If so, what are these requirements?
- What do you understand to be your coordinating role at the school? What other responsibilities do you have?
- How much release time will be provided in your schedule for coordination and administration? Is this sufficient?
- What practical needs do you have in order to oversee the administration and delivery of the Diploma Programme effectively? Which of these needs is the most important?
- How was the teaching staff involved in the decision to adopt the Diploma Programme? Are teachers genuinely committed to it?
- Do the school administration and faculty communicate regularly?
- How many full Diploma Programme students do you anticipate enrolling? Will they be selected in any way? If so, how?
- How will you actively encourage students to take the full Diploma Programme, rather than certificates? How will you address the needs of those students who are less able academically?
- Could you describe the proposed teaching timetable/schedule? Do the teachers have enough time for planning?
- Diploma Programme subjects are designed to be studied concurrently over two years. Will your teaching schedule reflect this or will you permit the registration of anticipated candidates?
- What types of meeting are organized for teachers? How often do they take place?
- What arrangements are planned for teaching TOK? Who will be involved? What kind of expertise do you think is necessary for this? Will there be someone to coordinate this component? How will the TOK programme be scheduled to be taught over the full two years of the Diploma Programme?

- Is the school committed to an involvement in community service? Who is responsible for organizing this at present? Will this person assume responsibility for CAS coordination? What kind of CAS activities are planned?
- What plans are there for the supervision and administration of extended essays? Will you ensure that the supervisors are always teachers with subject-specific expertise? How will students choose their topics?
- How will you ensure that the concepts of intercultural awareness and internationalism are promoted? Will this affect teachers' approach to their subjects? How?
- Are you aware of the online curriculum centre (OCC), the IBO's web-based resource for teachers? Are you prepared to administer the distribution of passwords for Diploma Programme teachers to this site?

## **Diploma Programme teachers**

- How were teachers involved in the decision to offer the Diploma Programme? How will the programme benefit the students at the school?
- How much time is provided for teachers to plan collaboratively? What working teams have been established?
- Has appropriate provision been made for the orientation and training of existing and new staff members to acquaint them with the aims and nature of the programme and its implementation in the school?
- Have teachers studied the relevant Diploma Programme documentation? In particular, are they familiar with the standards and practices of the programme and the relevant curriculum documentation?
- Have teachers developed appropriate course outlines? Are teachers now involved in preparing a detailed written curriculum based on the requirements of the programme?
- Are teachers familiar with the *IB learner profile booklet*? Will students be given appropriate opportunities to develop the attributes listed in the profile?
- Are teachers fully conversant with the assessment requirements of the programme? What internal assessment structures are in place at the school?
- Is there a commitment, on the part of teachers, to involvement in TOK and CAS? How will they be involved?
- Are teachers prepared to supervise students who choose to write extended essays in their subjects? Are they familiar with the requirements?
- What professional development opportunities have been provided for teachers with respect to the Diploma Programme? What plans are in place for future professional development opportunities?
- How will teachers be involved in the continuing development of the Diploma Programme in the school?
- How will teachers be involved in promoting the IBO's mission statement? Do teachers have an understanding of the international dimensions of the programme?

## **Librarians, counsellors and non-teaching staff**

- How will librarians, counsellors and non-teaching staff be involved in developing the Diploma Programme in the school? What is their exact role?
- What types of counselling services are available to students?
- How will librarians work with Diploma Programme teachers and students?



- Have any issues particular to Diploma Programme students arisen? If so, what are they? How have they been addressed?
- Is there a professional librarian?
- How can you support the pedagogical approach of the Diploma Programme, as explained in the subject guides and the IBO's mission statement?

## **Parents and students**

The principal aim of meeting with parents and students is to share ideas and information and to answer any questions they may have about the Diploma Programme as it might operate in the school and worldwide. Both parents and students will have many questions relating to:

- the philosophy of the programme, its academic rigour, the demands it will make on student time and energy
- what TOK, CAS and the extended essay entail
- how the Diploma Programme is recognized by universities
- what the differences are between the Diploma Programme and the national system of education.

The visiting team should ensure that ample time is available for these questions so that misgivings and concerns are dispelled and positive support is generated.

Students should have an opportunity to reflect on experiences, academic and otherwise, that they have found rewarding and/or challenging, and team members should ascertain their understanding of the Diploma Programme. In addition, it is important that the visiting team is aware of any outstanding needs students may have in order to achieve success.

## **Tour of school facilities**

- Are there adequate work facilities for each of the Diploma Programme subject areas (for example, science laboratories, gymnasium facilities, library, media centre, technology/computer labs, drama and art rooms, audio-visual equipment, teacher and student resources)?
- What plans are in place for additional resources and facilities? When will these be implemented?
- Are there appropriate and sufficient study facilities available?

## **The library/resource centre**

- Does the library adequately serve the requirements of the Diploma Programme and encourage both student and staff use?
- Is there appropriate budgeting and development planning?
- Are there sufficient appropriate materials, including journals and up-to-date reference materials in the language(s) of instruction, to facilitate individual student learning and to allow research for the extended essay and other assignments?
- Does the collection of texts support the subjects to be taught?
- Is there an international selection of periodicals?
- Is the library equipped with computers and CD-Roms? Is Internet access easily available? Are there plans to bring computers into the library?
- Do students have access to multimedia equipment?

- Do students have access to other libraries in the local community?
- What access do students have to the library (operating hours, access during the school day, and so on)?
- Is there adequate provision for students to work quietly and undisturbed? Who will ensure that this is effectively supervised?
- Do the library and resource centre contain books, resources and periodicals for staff professional development?
- Have library staff received appropriate professional development and are they aware of contemporary developments?
- Are library staff involved in planning for the needs of the programme?

# Outcome of the authorization visit

---

## Exit interview

During the exit interview, and based on the visit and on the review of the submitted application and documentation, the visiting team provides the school with its initial observations in the form of commendations, recommendations and matters to be addressed (as appropriate). The school must attend to any matters to be addressed in order for authorization to proceed.

The visiting team will also share orally the observations made during the visit. The team should comment on noteworthy practices as well as concerns that were observed. This should also be the final opportunity for visiting team members to check their facts and to ensure that the subsequent authorization visit report accurately depicts the school setting and its plans for the Diploma Programme.

At this time, the visiting team will **not** provide the school with a definitive response regarding the school's prospects for authorization but should explain that the authorization visit is but one part of a larger process. The IBO director general will make the final decision regarding full authorization or denial of authorization. The regional office will notify the school of any postponement of authorization.

The visiting team should stress to the school representatives that the team members will continue discussions among themselves after the visit and that adjustments to their oral report may be made. The visiting team will then complete a written report for the regional director. After consideration of the document and any changes, the regional director does one of two things.

- The regional director decides on the postponement of authorization, in which case the school will be informed in detail with a future date for a second visit at the school's expense.
- The regional director forwards a report, with a recommendation for action, to the director general, who then notifies the school directly of the final decision.

## After the exit interview

The visiting team leader will compile the report that will be circulated to all members of the team for their consideration and comments. The completed report will then be forwarded to the regional office with a recommendation from the visiting team regarding the readiness of the school to be authorized.

## Possible outcomes

1. **Authorization is granted** and the letter from the IBO director general indicates the date on which the school can begin teaching the Diploma Programme. The school may be required, before it starts teaching the programme, to complete further teacher training, to finalize the scheduling of courses, to improve some facilities, and so on. In such cases these will be listed in the director general's letter as "matters to be addressed" and the school will be required to send a report to the regional office by a certain date. Failure to implement such requests will result in a school's authorization status being put at risk and the withdrawal procedure (see article 10 of the *Rules for authorized schools: Diploma Programme*) may be put into effect. Also, the school will receive a letter from the regional director, indicating the commendations and recommendations, based on the visiting team's report.

2. **Authorization is postponed** if there are matters to attend to which involve significant changes, but it is obvious that the school is committed and has a specific plan in place to accommodate the deficiencies. Upon fulfillment of the necessary conditions, the school is required to submit, by a specified date, an extensive report to the appropriate regional office and, in some cases, a return visit at the school's expense (as determined by the regional office) will be scheduled. If the IBO is satisfied that the conditions have been successfully met, authorization is granted.
3. **The school is not granted authorization** to offer the Diploma Programme. The school administration and staff are not adequately prepared to deliver the programme. It will be the decision of the school community whether the school will continue to prepare for authorization to offer the Diploma Programme or not. A school cannot reapply for Diploma Programme authorization until a period of at least two years has elapsed since the previous application, and the normal application fees and expenses apply.